

# THE BRAHMAVÂDIN.

“एकं सत् विप्रबहुधावदन्ति.”

“That which exists is One: sages call it variously.”—*Rigveda*, I. 164. 46.

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### MITRA AND VARUNA.

1. Guardians of Law, Ye whose very nature is Truth, you ascend your chariot in the highest heaven. O Mitra and Varuna, whomsoever you protect here, to him the rain brings down the sweet water from heaven.

2. This world's imperial kings, possessors of celestial vision, O Mitra and Varuna, you rule in the sacrificial assembly. We pray for rain, wealth, and immortality : your spreading rays move over heaven and earth.

3. Imperial kings, strong heroes, rulers of heaven and earth, O Mitra and Varuna, you, the all-seeing ones, wait upon thunder with many-coloured clouds. Through the wonderful power (*Mâyâ*) of the Asura you cause the heaven to rain.

4. O Mitra and Varuna, your wonderful power (*Mâyâ*) rests in heaven : the all-impelling light, the sun, moves as (your) weapon. You hide him in the sky with the cloud and the flood of rain. O Parjanya, (through you) the drops of sweet water come down.

5. O Mitra and Varuna, the Maruts, like a hero, yoke the comfortable chariot for the achievement of what is good. For sending down water your spreading rays move over the many-coloured worlds. Imperial Kings, bedew us with the milk of heaven.

6. Parjanya speaks out, O Mitra and Varuna, with voice that is good, refreshing, awe-striking, and brilliant. The Maruts cover the clouds well. By your wonderful power (*Mâyâ*) you cause the red sinless heaven to pour down rain.

7. O Mitra and Varuna, by your all-sustaining, praiseworthy performance, you guard the world. Through the wonderful power (*Mâyâ*) of Asura and through Law, you cause the whole world to shine. You uphold the sun in heaven as a refulgent car.

*Rigveda*. V. 63.

This hymn is a prayer for rain.

If rain comes down prompted by the wonderful power of Varuna, and if the rivers get filled in obedience to the law of Varuna, it is easy to understand how he has come to be the Neptune of Hindu mythology.

The Sanskrit *Asura* is the same as the Zend *Ahura*. As *Ahura* means the Supreme Lord in Zoroastrianism, may not the wonderful power of Asura (*Asurasya Mâyâ*) referred to in this hymn be supposed to give us a clue to the source of the ancient Persian monotheism?

This hymn is interesting on account of the use of the word *Mâyâ* in it. The word has here a meaning other than its ordinary Vedântic significance. But the older Vedic sense of it is not unconnected with the new; for it may be made out even from this single hymn that the *Mâyâ* of Asura Varuna is obviously supposed to be the cause of the working of the universe and its parts in accordance with law and order. In the Vedânta also *Mâyâ*, which comes before time, is the cause of creation.

## MANY WELL KNOWN PERSONS ARE SEEKING TO FOLLOW THE TEACHINGS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S PHILOSOPHY.

### FUNDAMENTALS OF THE FAITH.

Swami Vivekananda is a name to conjure by in certain circles of New York society to-day—and those not the least wealthy or intellectual. It is borne by a ducky gentleman from India, who for the last twelve months has been making name and fame for himself in this metropolis by the propagation of certain forms of Oriental religion, philosophy and practice. Last winter his campaign centred in the reception room of a prominent hotel on Fifth avenue. Having gained for his teachings and himself a certain vogue in society, he now aims to reach the common people, and for that reason is giving a series of free lectures on Sunday afternoons at Hardman Hall.

Sufficient success has attended the efforts of Swami Vivekananda to justify a description of the man and his work in the United States.

### THE MAN HIMSELF.

The Swami Vivekananda is a pure blooded Hindu, born some thirty-three years ago in the Province of Bengal, and educated at Calcutta University, where he learned to speak the English language with ease and fluency. Of his early life he never speaks, save to talk in a general way about the great master who taught him the doctrines and practices he is now trying to introduce into this country. The outlines of his later life are better known to Americans, for he came to the United States three years ago as the representative of Hindooism at the Congress of Religions held in Chicago during the World's Fair. Afterward he went on a lecturing tour through the United States.

The personality of the Swami may be gathered in great measure from his picture. He is of dark complexion, of rather more than average height and heavily built. His manner is undoubtedly attractive, and he is possessed of a large amount of personal magnetism. One has but to glance at the grave, attentive faces of the men and women who attend his classes to be convinced that it is not the man's subject alone that attracts and holds his disciples.

The work of the Hindoo in this country consists at present in giving free lectures and holding free classes, initiating disciples and conducting a large correspondence.

At present, while the lectures and classes are popular, and the number of pupils daily increases, the Swami has only two proclaimed disciples. Both of these have changed their names and are now known by Sanskrit pseudonyms, prefixing the word Swami, which means "Lord" or "Master." Both of these disciples are Americans of foreign extraction, and one at least is well known in New York.

The Swami Abhayānanda is a Frenchwoman, but naturalized and twenty-five years a resident of New York. She has a curious history. For a quarter of a century she has been known to liberal circles as a materialist, socialist (some say anarchist), friend of Emma Goldman and others of that ilk. Twelve months ago she was a prominent member of the Manhattan Liberal Club. Then she was known in the press and on the platform as Mme. Marie Louise, a fearless, progressive, advanced woman, whose boast it was that she was always in the forefront of the battle and ahead of her times.

The second disciple is also an enthusiast. With that skill which Vivekananda shows in all his dealings with men, the Hindoo has chosen his first disciples well. The Swami Kripānanda, before he was taken into the circle and took the vows of poverty and chastity, was a newspaper man, employed on the staff of one of the most prominent New York papers. By birth he is a Russian Jew, named Leon Sandsberg, and, if it were known, his life history is probably as interesting as that of Swami Abhayānanda. He is a man of middle age, medium height, possessed of a shock of curly hair and a pair of eyes in which the fire of the true fanatic undoubtedly burns. He may be found at any time at the house in West Thirty-ninth Street.

### THE DOCTRINES OF THE SWAMI.

The following is a brief sketch of the Swami's fundamental teachings:—

"Every man must develop according to his own nature. As every science has its methods so has every religion. Methods of attaining the end of our religion are called Yoga, and the different forms of Yoga that we teach are adapted to the different natures and temperaments of men. We classify them in the following way, under four heads:—

"(1) Karma-Yoga—The manner in which a man realizes his own divinity through works and duty.

"(2) Bhakti-Yoga—The realization of a divinity through devotion to, and love of, a personal God.

"(3) Rajah-Yoga—The realization of divinity through control of mind.

"(4) Gnana-Yoga—The realization of a man's own divinity through knowledge.

"These are all different roads leading to the same centre—God. Indeed, the varieties of religious belief are an advantage, since all faiths are good, so far as they encourage man to religious life. The more sects there are the more opportunities there are for making successful appeals to the divine instinct in all men."

### A LECTURE BY THE SWAMI.

When I visited one of the Swami's classes recently I found present a well dressed audience of intellectual appearance. Doctors and lawyers, professional men and society ladies were among those in the room.

Swami Vivekananda sat in the centre, clad in an ochre colored robe. The Hindoo had his audience divided on either side of him, and there were between fifty and a hundred persons present. The class was in Karma-Yoga, which has been described as the realization of one's self as God through works and duty.

Its theme was:—

"That which ye sow ye reap," whether of good or evil.

Following the lecture or instruction the Swami held an informal reception, and the magnetism of the man was shown by the eager manner in which those who had been listening to him hastened to shake hands or begged for the favour of an introduction. But concerning himself the Swami will not say more than is absolutely necessary. Contrary to the claim made by some of his pupils, he declares that he has come to this country alone and not as officially representing any order of Hindoo monks. He belongs to the Sanyasi, he will say, and is hence free to travel without losing his caste. When it is pointed out to him that Hindooism is not a proselytizing religion, he says he has a message to the West as Buddha had a message to the East. When questioned concerning the Hindoo religion, and asked whether he intends to introduce its practices and ritual into this country, he declares that he is preaching simply philosophy.—*New York Herald*.

# The Brahmavadin

SATURDAY, 29TH FEBRUARY 1896.

## THE HARMONY OF RELIGIONS.

The "increasing purpose" which, according to the poet, "runs through the ages" has enabled the world of man to-day to receive, and to respond to, more of the inner truth of the universe than ever it was possible before. Scientific method holds now an unquestioned sway over all the higher thoughts of mankind, and the fire of criticism is vigilantly kept alive to burn away at once and without mercy all those things that, not being true in reality, still appear more or less like truth. The explosion of errors is taking place everywhere and all around, so that the air is almost insufferably full of its loud sound. Old errors are no more respected than comparatively recent ones; even great popularity cannot long extend the lease of life of any untrue or erroneous thought. As surely as true thought never dies, so surely does wrong thought meet with certain death. This age of such intellectual watchfulness and activity is noted, among many other things, for its comparative study of religions; and it is almost a fundamental axiom of *Comparative Religion* that the distinction of religions into true and false is unscientific and inconsistent with the real nature of things. It is a distinction based upon prejudice and ignorance; and, except in places where a belief in it is sustained by the vested interests of persons or institutions, it has already begun to give way before truer conceptions of the origin and growth of religions.

It is one of the most beautiful characteristics of humanity that it is religious; and, considering how closely religion has been associated with the life of man from its earliest advent on earth, and how it is in the inborn nature of man to be religious, we may well feel assured that all the "menaces of the future" regarding religion are both groundless and futile. "All that we love, all that constitutes in our eyes the ornament of life, liberal cultivation of the mind, science, grand art, may be destined to endure but for a time; but religion will never die. It is the eternal protest of the soul against systematic or brutal

materialism, which would imprison man in the lower region of the vulgar life. Civilisation has intermissions, but religion has not." This kind of eternal and elevating influence ascribed to religion by the great French historian and critic, Ernest Renan, may be seen to have been at work during the whole course of human history. Religions have invariably grown one out of another, and there is no religion without a past history of its own. The slow and gradual attainment of vigorous manhood by the child may lead to the decrepitude or even to the death of the parent religion. But it is easy to see that this does not prove that the exhausted religion was full of error and totally devoid of truth. The life of the son does not contradict the life of the father, even when there is much difference between them. "Let every good man desire to be defeated by his own son," says a Sanskrit adage, clearly implying thereby that the superior excellence of the son brings something decidedly other than discredit to the father, because the life of the offspring fulfils better in its day the very same purpose as the life of the parent tried to do in the past. Later religions do not therefore "destroy" but only "fulfil" earlier ones; and in regard to this matter the teaching of philosophy also is the same as the teaching of history, as borne witness to by no less a philosopher than Herbert Spencer. He says—"Thus the consciousness of an inscrutable Power manifested to us through all phenomena, has been growing ever clearer, and must eventually be freed from its imperfections. The certainty that on the one hand such a power exists, while on the other hand its nature transcends intuition and is beyond imagination, is the certainty towards which intelligence has from the first been progressing."

Therefore it is obvious that comparative religion, history and philosophy teach us that religions do not contradict each other, although it may be seen that the apprehension of truth to be found in certain religions is fuller than in others. As the sweet souled author of *Antony and Cleopatra* has brought out so well in this drama of his the question between religions now is certainly not which one of them is right while all the others wrong, but which it is that is most conducive to "gentleness, forbearance, and charity, united to heartfelt resignation to the will of God." Nevertheless propagandist bigotry often forgets this fact, and declares with an unjustifiable boldness that its religion is the only true one, and that as such it deserves to become the one universal religion for all mankind. Religious truth is foolishly

compared with arithmetical truth wherein two and two either make four and prove to be right, or, making anything else, prove to be wrong. Therefore it is, impossible for more than one religion, nay, for more than one sect of one religion to be true at the same time. This grossly arithmetical way of looking at religious truth is quite unjust to the past and ignores the future altogether. It is the old story of the pigmy standing on the giant's shoulders and seeing somewhat farther ahead; only the pigmy in this case thinks it to be as right as it is convenient to deny the uplifting support of the giant altogether; and in his pride of this somewhat wider vision he fancies that he has seen the utmost boundary of space, illimitable though it happens to be by its very nature. Such a pigmy cannot understand the unfolding of Divine Reason in the history of man, and is altogether blind to the beautiful pages of the book of nature wherein it is everywhere prominently written in shining, lovely, living letters that development or evolution is the one grand and majestic method according to which the wonderful organism of the universe is made to manifest its many-sided vitality. The truths of algebra grow out of the truths of arithmetic, and do not contradict but comprehend them. This is easy enough to understand. And why in the name of God, should we be called upon to believe that, of all things which tend to give a higher and higher meaning to human life, religion alone rests on a basis of ceaseless confusions and contradictions? That there are lower and higher forms of religion nobody can deny. But those that are able to follow the higher forms of it have no right to dispise those who can only follow the lower ones, because these lower forms are merely stepping stones to higher ones. It certainly forms an unquestionable duty on the part of the religiously strong man to work to impart his strength to the weak; and in the discharge of this duty he has strenuously to guard himself against the danger of falling into the tempting belief that orthodoxy is *his* duty. Monotheism embodies a higher truth than polytheism; and, although the highest forms of monotheism may be seen sometimes to be quite as sublime as pantheism itself, this latter kind of religion has about it a "greater capability of verification" and thus embodies a still higher truth.

If, then, it is true that religions are not made but grow, it has to be borne in mind that nothing can grow and get itself permanently established anywhere as long as it has not the capacity to get itself naturalised there. Exotics have, no doubt, been introduced on more than one occasion in the course of human history into the religious fields of peoples and nations; but, without sufficient and suitable modifications in their structure and the details of function, not one of these exotics has been able to flourish in its new habitat. Do we not know that the Christianity of Spain could not take root and grow in Holland in spite

of the tremendously terrific efforts put forth by the king, the commander, and the priest? And is not the Christianity of Holland to-day very different from the Christianity of Spain, although both go by the same name? Is not the Buddhism of Tibet different from the Buddhism of Ceylon? Do we not know into what kind of things some of the seeds of Zoroastrianism grew in the field of Judaism? In the course of an article entitled *Philosophy in its National Developments* contributed to the latest number (January 1896) of *Mind* we find Professor Knight writing thus:—

"More important it is to note that many persons who forsake a lower for a higher creed bring with them, and cannot help bringing, much that passed current in the lower; while the two cannot amalgamate. Many who abandon the customs of their country, who give up—it may be on conviction, or it may be through bribery—the faith of their ancestors, adopting a new cult, and becoming 'proselytes of the gate' at the instigation of the missionary, develop sundry vices in the course of the process. Any one who, on a sudden, accepts ideas which are not native to him, and practices which are not hereditary, becomes unnatural. He loses, rather than gains, by the process. Contact with the higher types of civilisation has not always elevated the lower. It is so much easier for the latter to assimilate the vices, than to imitate the virtues of the former; and the healthy relation between the two, when they happen to be brought into contact, is not that the higher should force its customs or practices, its religion, or government, or philosophy upon the lower—still less that the lower should try to extinguish the higher—but that each should tolerate the other, and gain, from contact with it, as much as it can healthily assimilate."

These are the wise words of a philosopher well known for his sober thoughtfulness, and deserve to be carefully treasured up in the heart by all aggressive enthusiasts of religion. Even in regard to the unquestionably humane and noble work of evolving everywhere the higher religious condition out of comparatively lower ones, it frequently happens that such work subserves the interests of the interested man more than it fulfils the purposes of God. Man can serve God only by following His plan of action as exhibited in nature and history; and man can serve his fellow-man also only by thus trying to be a fellow-worker with God. Men and things grow to acquire more and more of perfection mainly in accordance with their own nature, and the function of philanthropy consists entirely in helping on this natural growth.

The voice of Christendom crying for the reunion of the innumerable and conflicting sects at home has now become audible enough over the whole world. Nevertheless, the charity of Christendom is strangely responsible for much of the work conducted in the name of religion so as to produce discord and disunion abroad. This is because Christendom has not yet fully learnt the

lessons of its home experience in regard to religion. It is not without meaning that Lessing makes in his *Nathan the Wise* even the exclusive Jew and the fanatical Mussulman more tolerant than the Christian whose religion is a religion of love. The same religion is not fit for all men just as much as all religions are not fit for the same man; and this truth has been long recognised in India which is the one country in which a multiplicity of races and creeds have been living and growing side by side from very early times. Every type of religion is capable of being held in many forms, and history gives more than enough of evidence to exemplify the polymorphous nature of polytheism and monotheism. That even pantheism can be polymorphous is what Indian sacred literature distinctly teaches. One religion gets divided into many sects; and this has happened even in the case of such religions as tolerate no other. Therefore what may be called the polymorphism of religions seems to arise out of natural necessities, which it will be well for all religions to recognise. When religion becomes an affair between the individual and his or her God, when it becomes a matter of the light and the conviction in the heart of the religious person, as it does more and more in the highly evolved forms thereof, what may be called the psychological and spiritual temperament of the individual has quite as much to do with the form of the religion he adopts, as the quality and the amount of his culture and insight into the truth of things has to do with the kind of his religion. This idea has been brought out most beautifully in a remarkable lecture on "The Ideal of a Universal Religion" delivered by Swami Vivekânanda in New York. According to him no religion can lay claim to be universal which does not give scope and recognition to all possible natural variations. "Unity in variety is the plan of the universe," as he puts it. Will, feeling, intellect and introspection are, as psychologists tell us, the constituent parts or powers to be found in the composition of the human mind; and it is a matter of daily experience and observation that these are not all developed to the same extent in all individuals. The greater the development of a faculty, the greater is the impulse and the need for its exercise. "In society we see so many various natures of mankind.....First, the active working man; he wants work; tremendous energy in his muscles and his nerves. He likes to work, build hospitals, do charitable works, make streets, and do all sorts of work, planning, organising; an active man. There is then the emotional man, who loves the sublime and the beautiful to an excessive degree.....He loves with his whole heart those great souls of ancient times, the prophets of religions, the incarnations of God on earth.....Then again there is the mystic man, whose mind wants to analyse its own self.....understand what the forces are that are working inside, how to manipulate and know and get control over them.....There is then the philosopher, who wants to weigh every

thing, and use his intellect even beyond the philosophy." All these four types of men can not relish and assimilate the same kind of religious food; each wants his own dish, and the religion that can supply all this needed variety of spiritual food, while retaining its own organised individuality, is the religion that is most fitted to be a universal religion.

More than one religion may of course satisfy all these requirements; and whatever be the number of such religions they cannot and will not quarrel with each other. Hinduism is a religion of this description; and, being such, it has no quarrel with any other religion in the world. After pointing out that the Vedântists identify the gods of other religions not with the *Brahman* but with their Lord or *Īśvara*, Professor Max Müller says truly in his *Three Lectures on the Vedânta Philosophy* that they do not "thereby assign to these deities an inferior position." Prajâpati or *Īśvara*, Jehovah, Allâh, and God the Father are all equally "personal aspects" of the unknowable *Brahman*. "These personal aspects of the Divine Nature," he says, "were meant for the human understanding and for human worship; they may be called historical, if we remember that the history of God can only be the history of the human consciousness of God, or of the ideas which man, from the lowest stage of nature-worship to the highest stage of conscious divine sonship, has framed to himself of that transcendent Power which he feels both without and within." Such is the Hindu's philosophical synthesis of religions which is capable of harmonising all the past, present, and future aspirations of humanity to realise the closeness of its relation to God. And this religious harmony of India may be said to be intrinsically made up of four consonant tones each being intended to satisfy a particular type of man. As pointed out by Swami Vivekânanda in his lecture already referred to, there is the *Karma-mârگا*, or the path of works, for the man of will and action; there is the *Bhakti-mârگا*, or the path of love and devotion, for the man of feeling and emotion; there is the *Raja-Yoga-mârگا*, or the path of introspective self-concentration, for the mystic metaphysician; and lastly there is the *Jñāna-mârگا*, or the path of knowledge, for the intellectual philosopher. These various paths are simply the different psychological adaptations of the same religion, and lead to the same goal; this is fully recognised in the *Bhagavad Gîtâ* (IV. 23-39); and Sri Krishna has quite explicitly taught it to be so to Arjuna for the benefit of us all (IV. 11; VII. 16-21; IX. 13-24). All religions, all forms of worship, and all methods of approaching God lead to Him who is "One only without a second;" and in this consists the harmony of religions taught from ancient times by the sages of India—a harmony the sublime grandeur of which the whole world is destined to know and to appreciate in the fulness of time.



THE teaching of the Upanishads is this: the real self of each being and of all beings is the supreme eternal; this self, though unchanging, falls into dream; it dreams itself first into many separate hostile selves; then it dreams for their enjoyment the manifold sensuous life of the three worlds; then, that the hostile selves may not fall into perpetual fascination and enthrallment, the self dreams the last and sanative dream of death; and through the power of that last dream the wandered selves find no lasting joy in their sensuous ways, for they see that all this fades and wastes and wanes; that there is no unchanging joy outside the self, the self re-become one and awaking from all dreams to the reality of its immemorial oneness.

Thus awakened from the dream of life, they see the steps through which they fell to dreaming the dream of the world; they see that, as the rivers come from the ocean and return again to the ocean, as kindred sparkles come forth from a well-lit fire, so this dream of the world, this world of dream, came forth from the self, from the eternal that the seers plainly see as the womb of the worlds.

These teachings of the Upanishads are high inspirations and intuitions, from the golden dawn of India's life,—if indeed their essence and doctrines be not older even than India. To these high intuitions we cannot rise at once, though they awaken strong echoes in our hearts; for, since those sunny days, the self's great dream has grown heavier and darker, so that we can no longer hold clear truth directly by strong intuition, but must fortify intuition by intellect; must support the verdict of our souls by the reasonings of our philosophies.

Thus, it came that, in the latest period of India's life, the clear intuitions and shining wisdom of the Upanishads were expressed anew, in the philosophy of the Vedānta, whose lucid thought and admirable statement can compare with the highest work of the human mind in any age, and only gain by the comparison.

When one speaks of the Vedānta, one means, for the most part, the greatest man of the Vedānta school, the Teacher Sankara, who holds in India the supremacy that Plato holds in Greece, or Kant in the philosophy of to-day. Though his life was very brief, Sankara did all that could have been done to restore for later ages the pure wisdom of India's dawn; the Upanishads themselves he commented on and interpreted, writing much also of the poem which best reflects their spirit, the Bhagavad Gītā,—“the Master's Songs.” In his day, the learning of the school of the Vedāntins was enshrined in a book full of enigmas and obscurities, quite meaningless in parts, without an added explanation; this obscure book of memorial verses, the Brahma Sūtras of Bādarāyana, Sankara took as the theme of his most extensive, and, doubtless his greatest work, and did all that lucidity, intense concentration of thought, and fluent language could do, to make its dark places light, its rough ways smooth. Besides all this, and many practical labors of reformation and teaching that accompanied it, Sankara found time to write a whole series of lesser works in verse and prose, full of that wisdom of old, the love of which was the single passion of his passionless life.

From one of these lesser treatises, the “Awakening to Reality,”—*Tattva Bodha*,—we shall take so much as is needed to make quite clear, in the language of philosophy, what is meant by the great Indian teaching of oneness, the doctrine of the one self in all selves, the unity of the self and the eternal.

After certain sentences of introduction and benediction and an enumeration of the power of mind and heart required for the gaining of wisdom, Sankara barks back to the title of his book, and asks,—for most of the work is in the form of question and answer,—“What is the discerning of reality? It is this,” he answers: “That the self is real; that all things other than self are delusive.” Then with that intentness of logical thought which gives Sankara such a charm, this is at once followed by another question and a definition: “What is the self? He who stands apart from the physical, emotional, and causal, vestures; who is beyond the five veils; who is witness of the three modes; whose own nature is being, consciousness, bliss,—this is the self.”

Not a word in all this, whose meaning is not nicely and carefully defined, whose exact value in thought is not precisely ascertained. And as this sentence contains all that the self is not, as well as all that the self is,—in a word, all things whatsoever that exist,—by gaining a full insight into this one sentence we shall have mastered the whole world-teaching of the Vedāntins, and, above all, their supreme teaching of the One, above every change and seeming separation.

Beginning with what the self is not, in the individual, and with the assertion already made, that the physical vesture is not the self, Sankara asks: “What is this physical vesture?” And replies in a formula full of concentrated meaning, in which the wisdom of many ages, of many philosophers, is worn down to the fewest possible words: “Formed of the five elements fivefolded, born through works, it is the dwelling where opposing forces like pleasure and pain are experienced; it has these six accidents: it becomes, it comes to birth, it grows, it changes, it declines, it perishes; this is the physical vesture.”

We may ask here, as Sankara does in a later part of his book,—when he has left the individual to speak of the building of worlds,—what are the five elements of which the fivefolded nature of the physical body is formed? We must preface the answer by saying that, from the very beginning, Indian philosophy had become entirely penetrated with the thought that we can know nothing except our own states of consciousness; that anything outside our states of consciousness can only be, as Professor Huxley once said, matter for more or less probable hypothesis. With this belief and knowledge, the best Indian philosophy never speaks of matter and force as things—in themselves, as independent realities, as anything but more or less probable hypotheses; the phenomena which we should call the phenomena of matter and force they always expressed as far as possible in terms of our states of consciousness, and not as independent realities.

Looking in this way at the phenomena of the physical world,—the field in which the physical vesture is manifested,—they found that the states of consciousness from which we infer the existence of the physical world have five leading characteristics or qualities, or shades of color; in other words, the states of consciousness, which not only represent, but also are, the physical world, are five; these five are what we call the five senses, and what Indian philosophy calls the five perceptive, or knowing, powers: hearing, touching, seeing, tasting, smelling.

In order to reach clearness of thought, to give expression to that tendency of our consciousness which sets subject and object up against each other, in complement to each other, they further divided each of these types of physical consciousness into a trinity of

subject, predicate, and object; as, seer, seeing, seen; hearer, hearing, heard; knower, knowing, known. Then, seeking for an expression by which the last term in each of these trinities might be expressed by itself, and spoken of as having, for the sake of hypothesis, an independent existence, they developed the terminology of the five elements, ether, or rather the "forward shining" or "radiant" power, as the outward complement of hearing; wind, breath, or air, as the complement of touch, or, rather, extension; fire or light or radiance, as the complement of seeing; the waters, as the complement of tasting, because taste can only apprehend fluids; and, lastly, earth, as the complement of smell.

But as each of these hypothetical elements of sensation contains within it the possibilities of other sensations than the dominant one,—camphor, for example, being seen and touched and tasted, as well as smelt,—they were led to say that these elements, these types of physical consciousness, were not simple but compound, each having in it, besides its dominant character, a possibility of each of the other four; the dominant character and the four other subsidiary characters make the "five folded" nature of the elements spoken of by Sankara. Thus, the physical vesture or body is "formed of the five elements, fivefolded."

It is "born through works," or, as we should say, it is subject to the law of causality; which, for the physical body, largely takes the form of heredity. Then again, the physical vesture is subject to the six accidents of generation and birth, growth and change, decline and death. This needs no comment. In each of these characteristics there is also implied a sentence of discrimination: "Therefore this is not the self." The physical vesture is subject to causality; the self is not subject to causality; therefore the physical body is not the self. The physical vesture is subject to change; the self, the pure idea of "I am," is not subject to change; therefore the physical vesture is not the self, and so on, with the other characters.

This doctrine of the five elements is, therefore, not merely defective physics, but far rather a metaphysical attempt to render the phenomena of physical consciousness, the physical world, into terms of our states of consciousness, in a simple and methodical way.

So far the physical vesture, the first of the series of things which the self is not, defined in order to show what the self is. The self is, further, other than the subtle—or psychic or emotional—vesture. This vesture, again, corresponds to a primary fact in our states of consciousness. We quite clearly recognise one set of facts in our states of consciousness as being outward, physical, objective; we not less clearly recognise another set of facts in our states of consciousness as being inward, mental or psychic, subjective. Both sets of facts, both series of pictures and feelings, are outward from consciousness, other than consciousness, objects of consciousness; therefore both are not self. But the clear difference between them must be marked; therefore, the outward, objective series are spoken of as the physical vesture, while the inward, subjective series belong to the psychical or emotional vesture. Looked at closely, the real difference between these two is, that physical things are constrained and conditioned by both space and time; while psychic, mental things, though subject to time, are free from the rigid frame and outline of space. Both are, of course, subject to causality.

In the psychical, as in the physical states of consciousness, there are the "five knowing powers;" and we also speak of "the mind's eye," "mental touch,"

and so on. Indeed, according to Sankara's philosophy, hearing, seeing, touching, and the rest are purely psychical powers, even when manifested through physical organs, as "the eye cannot see of itself, nor the ear hear of itself."

As the physical vesture is the complex or nexus of the physical states of consciousness, so the psychical vesture is the complex or nexus of the psychical or mental powers and states of consciousness; these are free from the tyranny of space, though subject to causality and time.

The mention of Kant's famous triad, space, time, and causality, brings us to the third vesture, of which Sankara writes thus: "What is the causal vesture? Formed through ineffable, beginningless unwisdom, it is the substance and cause of the other two vestures; though unknowing as to its own nature, it is yet in nature unerring; this is the causal vesture." Without comment, this is hardly intelligible. The idea in it is this: Our states of consciousness, the pictures and feelings and sensations which are objective to our consciousness in unbroken series, are expanded, the one part in space and time, the other part in time only. Both are subject to causality. That is, the series of pictures, of feelings, of sensations are presented to our consciousness in a defined order, and we interpret this order as implying a causal connection; we consider the first of two states of consciousness in a series as being the cause of the second; the second as being the effect of the first. This attribution of causality, the division of our states of consciousness into cause, causing, and caused is a separation in a double sense. In the first place, it divides the single substance of existence threefold, into cause, copula and effect; and, in the second place, it separates the single substance of existence from consciousness, by establishing the idea of knower and known, of observer and observed, and thus sets up a duality. Now it is axiomatic with the Vedānta philosophy, for reasons which we shall presently see, that this duality does not really exist; that the substance of being, the self is not thus divided into knower and known, observer and observed.

Therefore it is said that this causal vesture or complex of the idea of causality is formed of unwisdom, the unwisdom which sets up a division in the undivided One. Now the idea of causality goes deeper than either space or time. It goes deeper than the idea of time, because time, properly considered is a product of causality. Causality divides the objective into causal series. The elements of these series must appear before consciousness in order, in succession, for this succession of effect to cause is the essence of causality. Now it is this very succession in the series of objects, images, sensations which is the parent of the idea of time, for consciousness of itself has no idea of time. If consciousness had a sense of the passage of time, then the sense of time, in different states of consciousness, would be equal; but in waking and dream, in dream and trance the sense of time is entirely different. Therefore the sense of time is derived, not original to the self; it has its rise in the succession of images which is the effect of causality.

Space is a further derivation of the same idea, arising from the presence of more than one causal series. A series of images, conditioned by causality, being presented to consciousness at the same time, thus giving a breadth or sideways extension to perception, and this breadth of extension is the sense or the idea of space.

Thus the ideas of time and space are not original and independent but derivative from the idea of cau-

sality; hence the causal vesture, or complex of the idea of causality, is said to be the cause and substance of the other two vestures, the psychical—or vesture of causality and time—and the physical—or vesture of causality, time, and space. We saw already that the causal vesture is formed of unwisdom, because the causal idea, the distribution of the one substance of being into causal series, is not inherent, or a property of the thing-in-itself, but merely the result of our mode of perception, “a result of intellect, which supplies the idea of causation” as Sankara says, thus anticipating almost the very words of Kant.

Born of unwisdom, this idea of causality is necessarily beginningless, or outside of time. Because, as causality is the parent of time, it naturally follows that it cannot be expressed in terms of time, or be said to have a beginning in time. As again, this causal idea goes to the very root of intellect, it cannot be expressed in terms of intellect; so it is said to be ineffable, or not to be spoken of in the language of intellectual thought.

This causal idea seems to have its root in the seeming necessity of the one substance of being, the eternal, to reveal itself to itself gradually, in a successive series of revelations. This gradual series of revelations of the eternal to the eternal is the cause of manifested existence, or, to speak more strictly, is manifested existence. Now this gradual series of revelations implies a gradually increasing knowledge which shall stop short only at omniscience, when the whole of the eternal is revealed to the whole of the eternal. And each step in this gradual revelation is perfect in itself, and a perfecting and supplementing of all the revelations that have gone before. Hence each is “in its own nature unerring.” But we saw that the revelation of each part of the eternal is in three degrees: first, as conditioned by space, time, and causality, in the physical world; then, as conditioned by time and causality, in the psychical or mental world; and, lastly, as conditioned by causality only; in the causal or moral world. Therefore the revelation in the moral world is freer from conditions than the other two, free from the errors of time and space, and thus “unerring wisdom” as compared with these. But before the whole of the eternal can be revealed to the whole of the eternal, the causal idea must disappear, must cease to separate the eternal into causal series; so that the causal idea is an element of error, of illusion, and therefore “unknowing as to its own nature.” This plenary revelation of the whole eternal to the whole eternal is “the own-being of the supreme self”; therefore the self is above the causal vesture, the causal vesture is not the self.

To change for a moment from the language of philosophy to that of common life, the teaching is this: The individual is the Eternal; man is God; nature is Divinity. But the identity of the individual with the eternal, the oneness of man with God, is veiled and hidden, first by the physical body, secondly by the personality, and lastly by the necessity of continuity which makes one physical body succeed another, one personality develop into another in the chain of rebirths which continuity and the conservation of—mental and moral, as well as physical—energy inevitably bring forth.

Now, freedom from this circle of necessity will only be reached when we have succeeded first in seeing that the physical body is not our true self, but outward from and objective to our true self; then that the psychic body—the complex of mental states—is likewise not our true self; and, lastly, that our causal

vesture—as containing within it the suggestion of our separate individuality opposed to other separate individualities, and thus different from the plenitude of the eternal which includes all individualities—is not our most real self; for our most real self is that very eternal, the “*Thcos* which is all things in all things,” as another teacher says. This is the awakening from the dream of the hostile selves, which, as we saw at the outset, the self falls into, and from which it will awake into a knowledge of its own fulness as the eternal.

The self, Sankara further said, “is other than the five veils.” These five veils—physical, vital, emotional, intellectual, spiritual—are a development of the idea of the three vestures. The physical veil is the physical vesture, regarded as a form rather than as matter; as formal rather than material, in harmony with the conception of Faraday, that the atoms of matter are really pure centres of force; the seeming substantiality of matter belonging not to the atoms at all, but to the web or network of forces which are centred in the atoms. The idea of a “web” of forces is exactly that of the Vedānta, which constantly speaks of the world as “woven” by the Eternal, as a spider weaves his “web.”

The next three veils—vital, emotional, intellectual—are sub-divisions of the mental or psychical vesture. A precise determination of their values would lead us too far into the mental psychology of India to be practicable at present. The spiritual veil, again, is the causal vesture, of which we have said much already.

Again, the “three modes” of which the self is “witness,” are what are called in the Vedānta: waking, dreaming, and dreamlessness. They are the fields of the activities of the three vestures; waking, the field of the physical vesture; dreaming the field of the psychical or mental vesture, whether in day-dreams or the dreams of night; and dreamlessness, the field of the moral or causal vesture, whether in waking inspiration, dreaming vision, or dreamless trance. Here, again, to develop the subject fully would lead us too far afield.

Freedom, the conscious oneness with the most real self, which is the eternal, consists in setting aside these vestures, in stripping off these veils. How this is to be done we can best show by repeating the words of Sankara: “just as there is the firm belief that ‘I am the body,’ ‘I am a man,’ ‘I am a priest,’ ‘I am a servant,’ so he who possesses the firm conviction that ‘I am neither priest nor serf, nor man, but stainless being, consciousness, bliss, the shining, the inner master, shining wisdom,’ and realises this in direct perception, he verily, is free, even in life.”

## Correspondence.

### NEW YORK LETTER.

Owing to various circumstances I was prevented from sending you my regular N. Y. letter. The following is in brief what has occurred since my last letter.

On February 24th, the Swami closed his series of public lectures and his work in New York, with a lecture in Madison Hall on “My Master.” It so happened that it was the very date of the celebration of Ramkrishna's birthday. On the preceding



Thursday the 20th, several young men and women took the Diksha.

There has been organized in New York a "Vedānta Society" for the study and propagation of the Vedānta literature.

From New York the Swami went to Detroit. In spite of the many attacks of the missionaries, his classes and public lectures were attended to overcrowding. Rabbi Grossman proffered the use of the temple Beth-El, which could not hold the great crowd, so that hundreds of people had to leave without hearing the great Hindu preacher. The Rabbi, in other respects too, proved his liberality and great friendship for the Swami by taking up his defence against the attacks of the clergymen in the newspapers. His introduction of the Swami in the temple was one grand eulogy of the Hindus and Hinduism. I hope to be able to get this introduction from the Rabbi for the benefit of your readers.

In Detroit, too, several persons joined the children of Rāmkrishna.

The Swami left Detroit after a fortnight's successful preaching, leaving behind him Kripānanda to continue his work in this city. He went to Boston, Mass. where he is to lecture before the graduates of Harvard University, and hold classes which have been arranged by one of his followers, a noble lady and enthusiastic adherent of the Vedānta philosophy. In the history of the great religious and spiritual movement initiated by the Swami in our country, the name of this lady will rank foremost as one who through her devotion to the cause, but more through her personal example of a pious and self-sacrificing life has contributed most for the spreading of the sublime truths of the Vedānta. May the Lord bless her.

K.

March 22nd, 1896.

## Notes and Thoughts.

Swami Vivekānanda has been doing some most valuable and successful work in systematic class lecturing in New York, with constantly increasing audiences, during the past two winters, and comes to Boston at a most opportune time.

The Swami gives the following description of his work. In explanation of the term *sannyāsin*, he said. When a man has fulfilled the duties and obligations of that stage of life in which he is born, and his aspirations lead him to seek a spiritual life, and to abandon altogether the worldly pursuits of possession, fame, or power; when, by the growth of insight into the nature of the world, he sees its impermanence, its strife, its misery, and the pultry nature of its prizes, and turns away from all these, then he seeks the true, the eternal love, the refuge. He makes complete renunciation (*sannyāsin*) of all worldly position, property and name, and wanders forth into the world to live a life of self-sacrifice, and to persistently seek spiritual knowledge, striv-

ing to excel in love and compassion, and to acquire lasting insight; gaining these pearls of wisdom by years of meditation, discipline and inquiry, he, in his turn, becomes a teacher, and hands on to disciples, lay or professed, who may seek them from him, all that he can of wisdom and beneficence.

A *sannyāsin* cannot belong to any religion, for his is a life of independent thought, which draws from all religions; his is a life of realization, not merely of theory or belief, much less of dogma.

In giving some idea of his work and its methods the Swami says he left the world because he had a deep interest in religion and philosophy from his childhood, and Indian books teach renunciation as the highest ideal to which a man can aspire.

The Swami's teaching, as he expresses it, "is my own interpretation of our ancient books in the light which my master (a celebrated Hindu sage) shed upon them. I claim no supernatural authority. Whatever in my teachings may appeal to the highest intelligence and be accepted by thinking men, the adoption of that will be my reward. All religions have for their object the teaching of devotion, or knowledge, or activity, in a concrete form. Now, the philosophy of Vedānta is the abstract, science which embraces all these methods, and this is what I teach, leaving each one to apply it to his own concrete form. I refer each individual to his own experiences, and where reference is made to books, the latter are procurable, and may be studied for each one by himself." The Swami teaches no authority from hidden beings, through visible objects, nay more than he claims learning from hidden books or MSS. He believes no good can come from secret societies. "Truth stands on its own authority, and truth can bear the light of day." He teaches only the self, hidden in the heart of every individual, and common to all. A handful of strong men, knowing that Self, and living in its light, would revolutionize the world, even to-day, as has been the case of single strong men before, each in his day.

His attitude towards Western religions is briefly this. He propounds a philosophy which can serve as a basis to every possible religious system in the world, and his attitude towards all of them is one of extreme sympathy. His teaching is antagonistic to none. He directs his attention to the individual, to make him strong, to teach him that he himself is divine, and he calls upon men to make themselves conscious of divinity within. His hope is to imbue individuals with the teachings to which he has referred, and to encourage them to express these to others in their own way, let them modify them as they will; he does not teach them as dogmas; truth, at length, must inevitably prevail.

--Boston Transcript. >

It is ecstasy the faculty by which the soul divests itself of its personality. In this state the soul becomes loosened from its material prison, separated from individual consciousness and becomes absorbed in the Infinite Intelligence from which it emanated. In this ecstasy it contemplates real existence; and identifies itself with that which it contemplates.

--Patanjali.

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